272 extraction occurs only in the southern Pangwe region and /164/ in two forms. The first is as follows. The cane is cut into pieces from six to eight centimeters long; the meat of the cane is removed by sticking the spiked stalk of Trachyphrynium danckelmanianum Braun et K. Schn. (mɔ̄ I) through it and scraping back and forth for a while (Fig. 104). A leaf is placed underneath to catch the scrapings, and later they are put in a basketwork plate and pressed out by hand. A second, more refined procedure consists of removing the bark from the cane with a knife and pounding it in a wooden trough. The pulp thus obtained is put in a sugar press (ojám), a crude piece of basketwork in rectangular form, made of Ancistrophyllum (nkáne), whose narrow sides end in loops through which two sticks are pushed. One of these is stuck through two poles planted in the ground, each with a hole drilled through the middle; the other stick is placed on top of the two poles. When the press is to be used, /Fig. 106 appears here in the original text/ a vessel (pot) is placed under it, the upper stick is taken off, the sugarcane pulp is placed in the plaited container, the stick is turned with both hands, and in this way the press is wrung dry. The sap, which can be drunk right away, is made primarily for elderly people who are no longer able to chew sugarcane meat; it is also made for medicinal purposes. /165/

2. Banana wine.

273 This wine is obtained from ripe bananas or plantains. They are peeled, cut in half, and then placed in a pot filled with water. The pot is covered with a perforated leaf and set in the sun for a day. The fluid is then carefully poured off, put in a calabash, and again set in the sun for a brief period of time. This banana wine or plantain wine (the latter is supposed to taste even better) is known only in the northern Pangwe region. Among the Jaunde it is valued very highly, as much as palm wine, which is attested to, among other things, by its special popularity with the older chiefs who are known as connoisseurs. This beverage, indeed, is not at all bad, and it is, incidentally, also popular with the Whites.

When a man dies and one of his relatives marries his wives, there is no additional payment of dowry. When a man loses his wife, the dowry is repaid fully, or in part, by the relatives of the deceased wife if she has left no children. If there are children, the widower makes no claim to the dowry.

The widow cuts her hair. After the death of the husband, the wife is made to confess the names of her lovers in order to make them give payments which will finance the celebrations at the end of mourning. She must weep for one whole day and one whole night; she may do nothing without the permission of her husband's heir; and for a month she stays dirty, dressed in an old loincloth. At the end of this time there are celebrations of the end of mourning which last several days. The widow sits for a whole night in the village square, and the husband's relatives throw her water and pimento. The following morning she jumps four times over a fire of dry banana leaves. While she is jumping, men hit her for the anguish which she has caused her husband to endure. After that she receives a new loincloth from her family and then, before beginning the dances, if she has not accepted remarriage to her husband's heir, she chooses a new husband from among the assembled men of the dead man's family.

Neither homosexuality nor bestiality have ever been recorded, to our knowledge, among the Fan.

Prostitution does not exist.

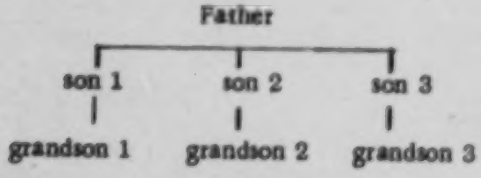
Impotence (eyel), if it is congenital, is attributed to the mother's having accidentally caused milk to flow onto the penis of her son while nursing him. If it occurs later, it is said to be from the abuse of coitus and it is believed that there is no more sperm in the impotent person.

Family Group. The family (nda ebur) consists of the man, his wives, his children, and his brothers. It usually includes several homes and constitutes a village in itself. The authority belongs to the father, and it is he who commands because of his being the most respected. He has absolute power, but also incurs certain duties, the most important of which is to find money or goods as dowry for the women whom his sons wish to marry. These dowries are usually obtained through payments made by the girls' husbands. The most complete mutual aid is obligatory among all members of the family, in all circumstances. When the parents have become too old to continue exercising their authority, they live with the family of their oldest son

where they enjoy great esteem and are consulted every time on decisions concerning all the family, [91] such as the marriage of a child, because this is a matter of alliance with another tribe, or such as moving the village. Young people of a poor family who get themselves adopted may be incorporated into the family and assimilated among its children. The adopted son (ntob) gets a wife from the head of the family which has taken him in. This wife, however, is only loaned to him, and the children whom he may have do not belong to him and are regarded as being of the adopter's family whose name they receive.

Each family has a fetish all its own, which is handed down through the oldest sons. It is often a reed (ayan) which is planted behind the huts of the village where the family lives, by a practitioner in the course of an important ceremony. The practitioner digs a hole, puts into it the bones of a member of the family killed by the bivur, spits onto it some wild pepper that he has chewed, and, before planting the reed, says, "ke nzue, ke wone, me nga non we bemvama e dzam ese dzah bor yûi, o ke tile e yenege" (without stealing or hiding myself I have taken from my ancestors, so that everything which will be asked of you by this family shall happen). The reed must be treasured and constantly kept clear of weeds which might grow around it. A fowl is sacrificed to this reed by the head of the family every time he wishes to undertake an important matter, and when the village moves the plant is taken along with the bones and replanted.

Social Life. Pahouin society is limited to a group of families which make up the tribe. The latter originates from a single family, the sons of which have left to establish other families in their turn. The separation occurs almost constantly in the third generation. The formation of a tribe may be diagrammed thus:



Grandson 1 establishes a family which keeps the name of the founder; grandson 2, a family which will take the name of this grandson; and

612 as we have maintained, in terms of filiation – the term ámɔ̀, 601 with a qualifying word indicating the filiation: thus ámɔ̀ wam, my son – and in terms of "fraternity," the term mwanɔ̀ indicating the descendants found in the same segment. From these two co-ordinates, some of the relationships can be represented as follows:

Table VI

Generations	Designations in the vertical direction	Designations in the horizontal direction
X	Mvam (sg)	
I	Mvam (sg)	
II	Esa (sg)	
III	Mwanɔ̀ (sg)	Bobémâg (pl)
IV	Bɛ̀ndɛ̀ (pl)	Bobémâg (pl)
V	Nwabâg (col)	Bobémâg (pl)
Y	Nwagbâg (col)	Mwan'ayôg (sg)

Abbreviations: sg, singular; pl, plural; col, collective.

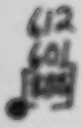
In the first place it seems that the word mvam, used specifically for the grandfather and the forefather, has a very general meaning. It is applied to the great-uncle and to both the ancestor of the direct line of descent and those of the collateral lines. According to Trilles mvam "is derived from a root va, which implies not the idea of a generation, which is sa or ba, 'to plant,' but of production, increase, growth... ." (1) The mvam, living or dead

1. Father H. Trilles, op. cit., p. 88.

who may be at the same time ancestors and guardian beings, constitute in an indistinct way the ngibâg, or ancestry. This voluntary confusion of terminology, being a sort of throwback into the past in the defunct part of the clan grouping, should be connected with the Fang custom of keeping the old men away from public life and reducing them to a sort of marginal life. (2) In the same way,

612 601 888

2. Ibid., p. 106, "The white-haired old



man is rarely esteemed in the Fang country. As soon as he no longer has the strength to carry a gun, he receives no consideration, and of his own accord he adapts himself to this role, joking and playing at every turn."

the fourth generation assures [115] the passage into the midst of the confused grouping called ewaŋ̀g, which, while specifically designating the great-grandchildren, also signifies progeny, the whole of the descendants related in an unspecified way, who are to one another mwaŋ̀g (plural, bəbə̀ŋ̀g), a term that could be translated as "brother of the same lineage" or simply as "relative." This passage which occurs at the first and fourth generations indicates the privileged position given to two intermediary generations, that of the ésa (father) and that of the mwanə̀ (son). In the case of this conquering people who rated their villages only by the number of its warriors, this fact must be linked to the importance given socially to the "man in his full strength" nyambə̀ (1). – and

1. Ibid., p. 106. "Mur means 'personality' and the particle nya indicates the idea of plenitude or superiority. Our French word 'maître' [master] corresponds fairly well to this meaning."

to "the man who has become adult" – ékwar. On these two generations is based the framework of traditional Fang society.

On the other hand, the strong fraternity expressed by the notion of mwaŋ̀g (2) survives only to the third generation with

2. Father Trilles writes that this term "indicates real kinship or filiation and not by adoption or blood brotherhood ...," op. cit., p. 251.

respect to a common mvam (grandfather). (3) The order of

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541 them various inscriptions that testify to his new state and remind
578 him of the obligation to submit to those who have made him a
185 man, a complete Fang. (1)

1. Cf. M. Briault, op. cit., pp. 183-184.

541 For a long time he submits to this superiority of his elders,
185 who intervene with the ancestors, the source of prosperity and
● 631 power, who permit him to fulfill and increase himself by mar-
riage and the possession of posterity, by controlling the circula-
tion of bride prices and women. Thus the male life curve
reaches a maximum which corresponds to the social influence of
the nyembeh, decreases as old age approaches (we have already
stressed the tendency in the past to discard the "grandfather,"
mvam), and increases infinitely after death, which gives him the
quality of "ancestor" with limitless power on behalf of the living.
Childhood and old age, representing the "low" points of this curve,
are preparation for the two "high" states which are characterized
by an increase in power and autonomy.

541 In ancient Fang society dependence guaranteed material
578 and spiritual security. It was centered on the relation between
182 the begetter (fas) and the begotten (émb wôm) rather than on that
between the dominating one and the one dominated. We have
frequently stressed the leveling tendency existing in the heart of
the nd'ê bôt and the dangers threatening any pre-eminence ac-
quired by personal right. The just distribution of women, wealth,
and tasks is expected from the "eldest," not any domination. In
another respect, during the period of conquest, attempts at domi-
nation and the establishment of excessive personal power were
limited by the important role of the "warrior" (who best incarnates
the qualities which caused Dr. Cureau to compare the Fang to
"modern Spartans") and the threats of rupture in the heart of a
grouping which needed to remain sufficiently large and coherent.
An equilibrium may arise between the power of the "eldest ones"
(religious and political pre-eminence) and the power of the young
men (martial pre-eminence). It involves particularly the rigid
regulation of the circulation of the women, the possibility for these

level that the agencies of authority, of social control, are most in evidence.

The head of the family is the senior, nɔ̀ɔ̀ or nɔ̀ɔ̀ nɔ̀ɔ̀, of the adult and active men, bəmya bɔ̀ɔ̀, "the true men." He is not necessarily the oldest in age, because infirm old men suffer a genuine capitis diminutio /a loss of status/. The founder of the hamlet or his eldest son can still, even if infirm, preserve a certain moral authority as father, ésa, of the family, but actual authority will then be delegated to a nya mɔ̀ɔ̀ chosen from his brothers, sons, or nephews, the élo'olo (Bertaut). In principle, a jal is composed of the founder, his old relatives /parents/, his younger brothers, his children and those of his sisters, his unmarried sisters, their illegitimate children and those of his daughters. Wives do not belong to the jal, their village is referred to as jalɛ̀. Of a divorced woman one would say, a kwya jalɛ̀, "she has gone back to her village." The size of the nda bɔ̀t depends upon different factors: security, the /family/ head's authority, the fertility of the soil, etc. I have already pointed out how several mal can be gathered into a nlam, a proper village. Nowadays the menda me bɔ̀t are tending to decrease numerically and no longer to correspond to the jal, which can from now on combine several /menda me bɔ̀t/. The limited or household family is becoming more and more important, while the government-sponsored institution of village chiefship /chefferie/, although it is often only an imperfect substitute for the authority of the nɔ̀ɔ̀ or the ésa, undermines that none the less. The size of an average nda bɔ̀t may be calculated at twenty /40/ persons (including the wives who do not belong to the jal), less in the towns and among the less prosperous people, more among large planters and the influential (minkukum).

The nda bɔ̀t used to be a religious, military, and economic unit. On the religious plane, the father, ésa, was the custodian of the biéti (Fang, biéri), the portable altar or ark of the ancestral cult containing the skulls of the ancestors; he made the decisions about initiations and bore their expense. The initiations have died out, and the missions have burned dozens, if not hundreds, of biéri. Security and colonial order have removed any interest in the ésa's military function. Only his economic role survives to some extent. He used to be the sole owner of the family goods (biɔ̂m), sole treasurer of income, and sole regulator of expenditures, of which the most important was the payment of "bride prices" (minsuba) for his younger brothers and his

no more than a mere conventional taboo, as with certain words considered crude in French. At birth and until weaning a baby is nyem (nlem) or nkeŋkɛ̂.

After weaning, which usually occurs when the child begins to walk by itself, between eighteen months and two years, the nlem becomes a mɔŋgɔ̂ (mɔɔ fam • boy; mɔɔ miŋga • girl); an uncircumcised boy is called more specifically mɔ̂ɔ̂l.

Circumcision takes place between eight and twelve years of age (1), before the first premonitory signs of puberty, especially the

1. In former times it was sometimes put off until the youth had killed his first enemy. See Trilles (no. 166) and Largeau (no. 48).

appearance of the first pubic hair (afaŋ, related to the verb faŋ • to do well, correctly, on purpose, from the masculine root FA?). The circumcised boy, nyi'an, "cut one," becomes an adolescent, mɔ̂ɔman, a term also meaning "son" (in relation to a man, see above, p. 63). Correspondingly, a pubescent girl becomes ngɔɔ (which can mean at the same time young girl, daughter of a man, or mɔɔn ayɛnɛ ngɔɔ, "to see the moon," that is, to be menstruating), or also ɛ̂lɛnan. /57/

The adolescent boy is still ɛ̂bis, uninitiated. The missions have now adopted the term mvɔ̂n, "initiated," to denote church members. Formerly, one became mvɔ̂n after initiation, mostly in the great national so initiation, the members of which were called mɔɔsɔ̂ɔ̂ (probably "child of the death /la mɔɔt/ of the sɔ̂"; compare this with the joking relationship awusɔ̂ • the dying /le mɔɔzi/ of the sɔ̂).

After initiation, that is, somewhere between the sixteenth and twentieth year, a young man though of military age was not yet a nya mɔ̂ɔ, a true person. This he became only upon marriage, when he attained what might be considered his legal, civil, even economic, majority.

A girl, ngɔɔ, who became ngal or nya ngal, a true woman, by losing her virginity, after marriage was nya miŋga, a /married/ lady, and ɛ̂sila or ɛ̂kua, a matron, when she had brought up her first children. A man with grandchildren was ntole mɔ̂t, an elder, usually around forty; this was the highest possible social position. Indeed,

an old man, *ndom mɔ̀*, who lived too long lost his prestige as he became decrepit. It seems probable that during the great migrations old people, particularly feeble old women, were abandoned in the forest when a village moved in size. Certainly death must often have come before the infirmities of age, from fighting, hunting, or the first serious illness. My informants were always unanimous in telling me that the skull of an infirm or senile old man could not be used in the *bwiti* cult.

With the second generation of descendants, a man, alive or dead, inevitably becomes *ɛ́mvam*, a forefather, in the double sense of grandfather and ancestor.

An age grade covers about three years; this is about the longest possible stretch of time during which two children born on different dates can both be at the least together, and it was approximately the interval separating two large collective initiation ceremonies. Classificatory kinship groups people by generation: all those of one generation are *bɔbɛnyɔ̀*, brothers, as mentioned above. Within an age grade the term *ɛ́jùlà*, "comrade," is more apt to be used. The succession of age grades created an internal hierarchy within the generation and strengthened the clan and tribal ties between the *bijùlà*. This strengthening was even more marked between the *bɔ'bɛwɔ̀ɔ̀* of the same time of initiation.

Modern life alters these ties, as much from the dying out or transformation of the initiations as from the loosening of ties in the extended family and also from the greater mobility of individuals and limited families. The little Fang boy born at Fort-Lamy, where his father is postal agent, scarcely feels himself to be the *ɛ́jùlà* of his clan *monyɔ̀* born on the same day at Libreville. Economic and political development tends more and more to set up hierarchies founded more on occupation, wealth, even education, rather than on age and rank in the family. /58/

4. Slavery, Castes, Clanes, Chiefdoms

Largeau spoke of the Pahouin as of a "people who have no synonym for our words 'king,' 'master,' 'servant,' 'workman,' 'slave.'" It is a fine phrase, but it only partially corresponds to reality. Largeau himself, in his encyclopedia, translates the word "slave" as *nsaghe*, a loan word from Gabonese (Mpongwé), he says. Further north, people

The female rite corresponding to *ôl* is *mevungu*, about which little is known, for the reasons mentioned earlier. It was not a clan rite, since the women of a village would, in consequence of exogamy, belong to different clans. Like *ôl*, its function was to make of the initiates accomplished women, *beaya bengueu* or *beaya binga*, fertile, free of *évu*, and disciplined, and perhaps, in addition, to set up a community bond between the women of a village in place of the mixing clan bond among them.

Initiates of both sexes were exempt from numerous general food taboos. They were bound together by an obligation of mutual aid reinforcing and even transcending that of clan fraternity. The dying out of initiations has definitely left a void which contemporary Fahouin are trying to fill; the new syncretist rites seem to have succeeded better in this than the churches and political parties.

c. Old Age

The *nya mbôô* and the *nye minga* are people in full possession of their faculties, quite capable of fulfilling their social roles. Their prestige is in proportion to their abilities; when they are no longer "true" men or "true" women, society is inclined to lose interest in them and to push them aside. An old man can mitigate his loss of physical power by his wealth or his skill in magic; an old woman owns nothing and easily incurs the risk of an accusation of sorcery. Her decline begins earlier than a man's, when she ceases to bear children or to be physically attractive, while a man reaches his prime when /101/ he has grandsons living with him and accepting his authority. But this authority lasts only so long as a man can "stand up for himself" /*se défendre*/ in the semi-colloquial sense of the word. Nowadays the ease with which villages and extended families burst their bounds geographically often accelerates this decline, which some *minkukum* palliate thanks to the polygamy on a large scale that enables them to retain economic power.

Old people without children have a very hard time of it, even in regions converted to Christianity, especially widows, who in their affinal family do not benefit from the clan obligation of mutual aid. In times past old people were abandoned in the forest during migrations; they are still left in *bilik*, deserted villages, when the main body of the village moves, for instance, to establish itself along a

road. The missions have tried, with unequal results, to ameliorate the fate of old people without children, certain clan "societies" have also been active in this direction, but none of it goes very far. Moreover, the old people accept their lot and occasionally joke about it among themselves with the rather biting irony that seems out of the mental characteristics of the group. Some old people kill themselves "from being tired of life." According to Trilles, some used to burn themselves to death voluntarily. According to Largeau, the heirs took the initiative in this so as to make the inheritance available.

The least wretched old people are those with children, particularly sons (1), since daughters usually live with their affinal family. There

1. Cf. Eza Boto, Ville cruelle (no. 182), for an illustration of relations between mother and son.

does exist a genuine obligation for children to provide parents with food, which is sanctioned by paternal or maternal curse in case of default.

f. Death and the Afterlife

Every death is suspect, but that of a nya mbɔ̀ more than another, because a nya mbɔ̀ does not die: someone kill him, though it may be none other than himself. Therefore the death of a man of some importance was always followed by an autopsy: the ngengɛ̂ would cut open the body and examine the thoracic organs, nlem, the seat of intellect and will, to look for signs of sorcery, the work either of another or of the dead man should his évu have turned against him or been killed by a malignant agency. There also appears to have been a magic process, évɔ̀mɔ̀ɔ̀, that revived the dead long enough to put questions concerning the cause of death.

If the autopsy revealed that the deceased was a sorcerer, nnem, the body was burned or thrown into a large river or perhaps buried at a crossroads far from the village. If he were mie, free of évu, the regular mortuary rites ensued. The body was washed in warm water, massaged and softened, then rubbed with baa dissolved in palm oil, wrapped in a white loincloth, watched over by armed men while the grave was made ready and the relatives /102/ and affinal kin /alliés/

Next, the establishment of urban and rural municipal councils permits financial decentralization. Towns under the term "urban communes," cantons, and sometimes whole subdivisions under the term "rural communes" received a legal character, with a domain to manage and a budget to fix. Elected councilors under an appointed mayor had to study plans for road works, to set up construction or maintenance programs, inquire into taxes? /taxes/ and assessments /impôts/, and have an eye to a sound financial position.

In towns this was nothing new, but its extension to wide rural areas was an experiment. Boulou or Beti country, where there was no risk of these new methods giving offense to a strong traditional /social/ structure, was the ideal place for trying out a new /kind of/ organization.

Throughout the elections arranged to fill the posts of councilor, we can see crystallizing the most striking traits of the new élite, the characteristics of the aristocracy or oligarchy that will get itself into power.

Pessimists had expressed fear that such elections, based on almost universal suffrage, would overthrow the classical social values and impair the prestige of the present acting élite.

This point of view disregarded the fact that in a country practically without stratification, no one can keep authority without the support of public opinion. /132/ Granting the vote to vassals in a feudal society may unsettle the power of the nobility. It is quite otherwise here, where chiefs of village or canton are most commonly chosen by election.

The older men have preserved a privileged position vis-à-vis the younger generation. A comparison of the age pyramid of councilors with that of the adult male population as a whole readily shows this: (table on following page).

The younger generation is poorly represented. Mature men of thirty to forty are represented in proportion to their ratio in the total population; but men of forty to fifty or of the older age group are heavily represented. Electoral influence has not been seized by the younger men.

Neither does it appear that the poorer class, more numerous than the rich, has benefited from the ballot so as to eliminate the latter. From the point of view of the possession of a certain amount of wealth, we can assert that municipal councilors are much better off than the common people.

Distribution by Age

Age Group	Elected Municipal Councilors	Total Adult Male Population (1) (Nyong-and-Sanaga)
	Percent	Percent
20 to 30 years	9	26
30 to 40	33	29
40 to 50	37	28
Over 50	20	15

1. Evaluation made according to censuses established by the subdivisions; the documentation is not faultless but nevertheless is indicative.

The figures given below for the whole population are not definitive, but as they have been taken from a recent complete census they may be considered good approximations.

Distribution of External Signs of Wealth
(for 100 persons)

	Masonry Houses	Bicycles	Automobiles
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Municipal councilors	27	90	11
Adult male population of Eboiowa	1.4	21	0.3

Not for nothing do the Pahouin use the word nkukuma (rich) to designate a chief. The chosen leaders are the rich men. /133/

A study of the matrimonial situation enables us to be more specific about the personal characteristics of elected men. Polygamy is much more common among them than among the population as a whole.

6:Alexandre and Binet--169 G-5 (1946-1954) 1958 F169 Fang F169

Distribution According to Matrimonial Status

	Municipal Councilors	Sample of the Total Population of the Bovino and Beti Area (1)
	Percent	Percent
Polygamous	43	23
Monogamous	43	63
Unmarried	3	14

1. A random sample taken for the study of family budgets, 1954, op. cit.

That councilors are often polygamous is to be explained in terms of their relatively advanced age and their wealth.

As elderly possessors of wealth and polygamous, do the elected men embody all the traditional ways in contrast to a progressive younger generation? An examination of occupations, of educational level, and of religion reveals that the actual situation is more complex.

Distribution by Occupation

	Municipal Councilors	Adult Male Population of the Nyong and Sanaga Region (2)
	Percent	Percent
Chiefs	30	1.8
Planters	30	85
Office-holders	14	0.5
Trade employees	3	1
Traders	10	7
Craftsmen	5	?
Catechists, mission monitors	2	2.3

2. According to the annual administrative report; approximations are involved, Yaoundé-Ville being excluded.